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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

14 January 1949

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM NO. 122

SUBJECT: Imminent Reinforcement of Israeli Air Force.

According to several recent reports from reliable sources, a coordinated movement to expedite delivery of a powerful force of fighter aircraft from Czechoslovakia to Israel will almost certainly take place during the latter part of January. This delivery will consist of 54 fighter aircraft, including Messerschmitts and British types to be flown in groups from Czechoslovakia to Israel. New US-built air transports are now also en route to Israel. Furthermore, the shipment of arms by air from Czechoslovakia to Israel appears to have been stepped up and aircraft of the Czechoslovak Bata Shoe Company have been pressed into service.

The reinforcement of the Israeli Air Force at this time with 54 fighters would increase its order of battle by 70%. The Israeli air force, which presently holds a position of superiority, would thus gain undisputed control of the air over any Arab combination. This major logistical operation strongly suggests that Israel: (1) has little confidence that the current negotiations can terminate the Arab-Jewish war; and (2) anticipates that hostilities may continue with increasing intensity.

Flights to Israel by the fighter aircraft will probably involve intermediate stops in Bulgaria or in southern Yugoslavia. Both these countries have already facilitated the clandestine air movement of arms from Czechoslovakia to Israel by permitting use of their airfields. From either of these areas, fighter aircraft could make non-stop flights to Palestine over Greek territory. Although a slight detour

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